

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Youth Weeks a hit in relocated setting

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

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While Hurricane Katrina's direct hit last August on Gulfshore Assembly near Pass Christian might have dampened the high spirits of those planning to attend one of this summer's Mississippi Baptist Youth Week camps there, the massive storm certainly didn't drown expectations.

Preparations were quickly made to move the popular camps to Hinds Community College in Raymond with programs and schedules intact, and it appears the camps are thriving in their new environment.

A total of 747 campers participated during the five weeks of what has historically been one of the best camp experiences in Mississippi Baptist life. During those five weeks, leaders recorded 18 professions of faith, 31 rededications of life, and one decision to pursue vocational Christian service.

The comment of one camper during week four was typical: "I've never been to a youth camp before. It's the best thing I've ever done." With a broad smile, the camper added, "Everyone likes me here."

During each week of camp, different camp pastors and musicians provided leadership:

- Week 1 — Gary Permenter, Permenter Ministries, speaker; Kevin Williams, Kevin Williams Ministries, music.

- Week 2 — Jon Daniels, First Church, Monticello, speaker; Will Reedy, The Journey, music.

- Week 3 — Clay Stegall, First Church, Madison, speaker; Will Reedy, music.

- Week 4 — Ken Hester, First Church, Pontotoc, speaker; Tom Edwards, Eagle Ridge Community Church, music.

- Week 5 — Kevin Cooper, First Church, Brandon, speaker; Tom Edwards, music.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the Youth Week experience comes through the service of the 19 college students who give sacrificially of themselves during the camps.

"Unlike Gulfshore," said Leslie Gray of New Albany, "we're not completely secluded at Hinds. We see other people, like Hinds faculty and students. It gives



TIME OUT FOR RECREATION — Campers participate in one of several recreational events, part of the program at Mississippi Baptist Youth Weeks relocated this year from Gulfshore Assembly to the campus of Hinds Community College in Raymond. (Photo by Tony Martin)

us more reality checks, and a greater opportunity to minister."

"I thought at first, after Katrina, that we wouldn't even have camp, that this was the way God was telling me that He didn't want me to work at camp," said Jessica Worsham of Bogue Chitto. "When I found out that we were going to have Youth Weeks, I realized camp was special not because of where it was, but because that was where God was."

"If they (campers) will open hearts and open minds, they will encounter God," said Beth Short of New Albany.

"There are a ton of camps churches can go to," said Zach Polk of Prentiss. "A lot of

them, though, are too expensive and too far away, and aren't a reality for some churches. For kids who want a great camp experience, we can offer the same thing as a Centrifuge, but just on a smaller scale."

"You encounter some of the kids you get to know at camp everywhere, all over the state," said Gray. "Just this past week, I had an older camper say to me, 'Leslie, I've never been to camp before, but I'm having the time of my life.' For that one kid, it's all been worth it."

"I think all of us can identify one kid... that if we'd done camp for just that one kid, it's OK, but I've had five of those 'one kids.' You can see how they've grown in just five days," Short said.



Miss. CP hits \$2.8M in June

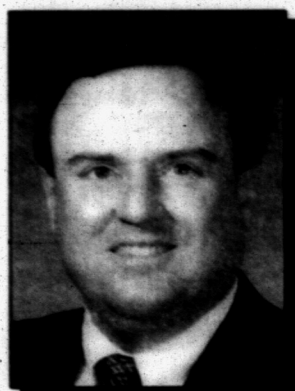
Mississippi Baptists started the summer with a strong showing of more than \$2.8 million given to the work of the Lord through the Cooperative Program (CP) in June, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board which disburses the funds. The June total of \$ is 2,851,340 is 6.9% lower than the \$3,062,898 given last month, and five percent lower than the \$3,001,697 given in the same period in 2005. Total Mississippi CP giving for the current fiscal year, which runs from January-December, stands at \$17,792,239, which is 6.8% above last year's giving during the same period and 13.6% ahead of current year budget needs. The 2006 Mississippi CP budget of \$31,314,491, was approved by messengers to the 2005 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. A total of \$2,609,541 is needed each month to meet the convention board's budget for 2005. In addition to helping support more than 10,700 missionaries in the U.S. and around the world through affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mississippi CP also helps fund such programs as the Young Musicians Camp on July 24-28 at Blue Mountain College; Centrifuge on July 17-22 at Mississippi College; and CentriKid on July 20-22 at William Carey University.

SBC CP up for month

NASHVILLE, Tn. (BP) — Contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) for June were \$17,182,506, 4.2%, or \$686,203, above the \$16,496,303 given in May, and 36.9%, or \$4,627,306, above the \$12,555,201 received in May 2005, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman. As of June 30, 2006, the year-to-date total of \$151,274,474.46 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is \$6,257,350.56 above the \$145,017,124 received at the same point in 2005. The 4.31% year-to-date increase is the largest growth trend seen at this point in the year during this decade. Southern Baptists' designated giving of \$172,936,738 for year-to-date is 1.2%, or \$2,038,721, above gifts of \$170,898,017 received at this point last year. The \$25,155,142 in designated gifts received last month is \$11,615,756 above the \$13,539,387 received in June 2005, an increase of 85.8%. Contributions to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering fueled the upsurge in designated gifts. The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention.



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Get ready, stay ready

War is once again visiting the Middle East, as it has throughout most of recorded human history. At the confluence of three of what academics call the Great Religions of the World (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), the area has always seethed with intractable violence and political/religious intrigue.

Mix that age-old problem with the world's unslakable thirst for oil — the dwindling remainder of which is overwhelmingly located in the Middle East — and an abundant supply of high-technology weaponry, and the stage is set for tragedy on a scale we have never seen before.

It's a bad neighborhood.

No one's record in the Middle East is without blemish, but it does appear that the Jewish state of Israel has once again been forced to defend itself against increasingly-sophisticated attacks from rump Islamic terror groups like Hezbollah that operate from nearby countries like Lebanon. Those groups are in turn heavily supported by countries like Syria and Iran, which

widens the conflict and threatens to engulf the entire region in all-out war.

If that happens, countries outside the Middle East with "interests" in the area will feel compelled to become involved, and whatever actions they take are not likely to lead to a lessening of tensions. As if modern conventional weapons are not capable of inflicting tremendous suffering and pain, policymakers in these countries will have to factor in the possible introduction of nuclear weapons.



Is all this beginning to sound like Armagedden? If so, we would not be the first generation to believe we were living in the Last Days.

When a lightning strike set off a massive fire in the virgin forests of the northeastern U.S., smoke so blackened the sky that Puritans living downwind concluded that the lack of daylight was a sign the Lord was on His way back. During the extreme devastation of World War I, reports began to circulate that the German leader Kaiser Wilhelm II was the much-anticipated antichrist and the end was near. Virtually the same was said about Adolph Hitler in World War II.

In our own day, we have had Edgar Whisenant's 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Be in 1988, which sold more than 4.5

million copies. When the Rapture didn't occur in 1988, he of course had the follow-up, The Final Shout — Rapture Report 1989, which Whisenant updated every year through 1994. Apparently, he gave up trying to predict the Rapture some time after the 1994 edition.

We should keep all that in mind when we hear this time, as we no doubt will, that the end is near because of events in the Middle East (and in other parts of the world, for that matter). Instead of succumbing to the hysteria, we should simply resort to the words of Jesus in Matt. 24:36-44 (NIV):

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

There. Don't you feel better already? Don't try to divine the future; don't even give a worry to the future. Just be ready. Live your life every day as if Jesus is on His way.

It's time people saw us living like we believe that, anyway.

GUEST OPINION: The strangers within our gates

By Martha Stockstill, member
First Church, Jackson

can follow this command by simply ignoring newcomers. I'm not hurting them if I don't speak, if I don't notice them, if I don't offer any help. I'm OK."

• However, God had more to say: Treat them as well as you treat citizens. Sometimes we don't even treat each other with respect, but God is saying that if foreigners live in our community, we are to treat them as if they belong. That's harder to do. That requires me to do something.

• There's still more in this Leviticus passage: love them as you love yourself.

Because of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, we are commanded to love the stranger within our gates as we love ourselves. How can we do that if we're angry about the changes within our communities, about the foreign words we see and hear in

stores, and when we have to press "one" on the telephone to hear our own language?

Many churches in Mississippi have international ministries through which we fulfill the Great Commission without having to leave home. We become friends and helpers to the strangers within our gates. We teach conversational English, reading and writing, quilting, the driver's manual, citizenship, and much more.

We visit our students in their homes, take off our shoes if that is the custom, eat tamales and mangoes, drink green tea, support them in lonely times, help find a doctor, walk with them through the maze of enrolling their children in school, encourage them when they're homesick, and sometimes help pay bills — and we always tell them that Jesus loves them.

If you look around your community and notice strangers who are different and speak a different language, perhaps the Lord is calling you to put feet to the words we sing, "We've a story to tell to the nations."

A Literacy Conference is scheduled at Crossgates Church in Brandon on July 27-29. At this conference, there will be sessions to guide volunteers through the steps to begin a ministry to international people. There will also be sessions to learn basic principles for teaching conversational English and how to teach the Bible to those with limited English skills.

Paula Smith, literacy and language missions consultant for the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, is coordinating the conference. She can be reached at (601) 292-3336 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 336. E-mail: psmith@mbcb.org.

Why don't you contact Paula and get more information about the ways we can love the strangers within our gates?

Editor's note: Stockstill has been a volunteer teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL) for 25 years, both in her local church and overseas. She also trains volunteers on how to use literacy programs to share the Gospel. She may be contacted at stockstillm@aol.com.

Democrats may fight marriage initiatives

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Washington Blade, a homosexual newspaper, reported July 14 that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) has devised "a five-point plan" to combat ballot initiatives to protect traditional marriage in state constitutions, although a DNC spokesman quoted by the Blade would neither confirm nor deny the report to Baptist Press.

The Blade said DNC efforts were spurred by a July 6 ruling by New York's highest court, which held that "the New York Constitution does not compel recognition of marriages between members of the same sex."

Homosexual activists took the New York ruling as a sign to ratchet up efforts in states where voters could have a say on whether homosexual couples should be allowed to marry in their state, and now the DNC is lending resources and guidance, according to the Blade.

Damien LaVera, a spokesman for the DNC, told Baptist Press the committee is against Republican efforts to use the homosexual marriage issue as a tool for gaining votes in the November elections.

"We recognize that individuals have differing views about marriage and about the best way to ensure equal rights and protections for all American families," LaVera said. "We

respect those differences. What we oppose and believe are inconsistent with American values are mean-spirited efforts to scapegoat any group of people for political gain."

LaVera refused to confirm or deny the Blade's report — which was attributed to him — that the DNC has devised a five-point plan for fighting ballot measures, but he spoke briefly to Baptist Press about some of the actions the committee is taking in regard to marriage amendments.

"We're calling those efforts what they are, we're working to strengthen our state parties, we're consulting with advocates on the ground," he told Baptist Press (BP).

The Blade reported that as part of a five-point plan, the DNC is "labeling the anti-gay ballot measures 'divisive' ploys by the Republicans and others to deflect voter attention from other important issues, including the [Bush] administration's failed policies."

Also included in the plan, according to the Blade, is an effort to build up the Democratic Party by training "state party operatives in all 50 states on how to campaign against anti-gay ballot measures."

Two more parts of the plan, the Blade said, are to work closely with a homosexual advocacy group to "develop strategy and talking points" on



the anti-gay ballot measure issue" and to work "cooperatively with campaign organizations fighting the ballot measures in each state." The fifth element is to "empower and organize" homosexual communities nationwide through the DNC's homosexual outreach coordinator, the Blade reported.

All five actions, though attributed in the Blade article to LaVera, did not include direct quotes from the DNC spokesman.

The Blade further reported that the DNC assisted a homosexual group in Illinois with efforts to block a marriage amendment from going before voters in November. In May, Protect Marriage Illinois, a pro-family initiative, turned in more than 345,000 signatures in an effort to put a referendum on the November ballot calling on the General Assembly to constitutionally protect marriage from redefinition.

"As we move forward in this election year, we will help in a variety of ways," the Blade quoted LaVera as saying.

According to the Blade, the DNC contributed \$10,000 to the Illinois cause, but LaVera told the newspaper he would not confirm it because committee policy prohibits disclosure of contributions made in electoral efforts.

LaVera spoke mostly on background to Baptist Press except to say the DNC opposes "mean-spirited efforts" against "gay marriage" and to refute

Baptist Press' characterization of marriage amendment supporters as "pro-family."

"Democrats believe that the best way to support families is by working to address our nation's serious problems," LaVera said. "Democrats are fighting for our nation's families every day by pushing to make healthcare affordable for all Americans, by demanding that we raise the minimum wage, by working to create good jobs in America, by fighting for good public schools and by demanding accountability from elected leaders about the war in Iraq and about corruption in government."

"These are the real challenges facing America's families, and they are the challenges we are working to meet."

Meanwhile, California's Democratic candidate for governor threw his weight July 7 behind a homosexual marriage bill, promising to sign such legislation into law if he defeats current Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger during the November election.

Phil Angelides, who won the Democratic primary in June, announced his support one day after New York's highest court refused to legalize homosexual marriage in its much-anticipated decision.

The likely Democratic nominees for governor in Massachusetts and New York also support homosexual marriage. Currently, no governors publicly support such marriages.

Times rips rulings

WASHINGTON (BP) — Three abortion clinics that were responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of unborn children have closed in recent weeks in the United States. The clinics were Women's Services P.C. in Omaha, Neb.; Central Women's Services in Wichita, Kan.; and Summit Medical Center in Birmingham, Ala. The closings continued a trend for abortion providers during the last two decades. The number of abortion providers in the United States has decreased by 37% since 1982, according to a 2003 report published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute. That same study showed 87% of U.S. counties do not have an abortion provider. Women's Services, whose property was purchased by the pro-life Child Saving Institute, was Omaha's only abortion clinic, LifeNews reported. The pro-life organization Operation Rescue (OR) bought the Wichita clinic and announced its closing June 29. The Birmingham clinic surrendered its license June 14 after clinic personnel allegedly told a woman in February she was only six weeks pregnant and gave her The Los Angeles Times published a newspaper editorial July 10 criticizing the New York high court for not legalizing homosexual marriage and the Georgia Supreme Court for reinstating a constitutional marriage amendment — but the Times went one step beyond simple criticism and called the legalization of gay marriage the "enlightened" approach. "Neither of these decisions is binding on the courts of other states, any more than was the famous 2003 ruling by Massachusetts' high court that gay marriage couldn't be prohibited," the editorial stated. "So there's still hope that California's Supreme Court will take a more enlightened view of the issue when it next hears a challenge to heterosexual monopoly on civil marriage. Advocates of same-sex marriage have turned to the state courts since Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's ill-advised veto of a same-sex-marriage bill last year, but hopefully the legislature will keep trying ..."

However, if support for homosexual marriage is the enlightened view, then there are quite a few unenlightened Americans. Roughly six in 10 Americans oppose same-sex marriage, polls show, and 20 states have adopted constitutional amendments banning it. Those amendments have passed with an average of 71% of the vote.

Looking back

10 years ago

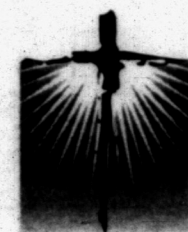
Kathryn Bearden and Roy Smith, with a combined tenure of 67 years of Baptist Student Union service in Mississippi, retire at the end of June.

20 years ago

The college and career Sunday School class of Pelahatchie Church volunteers to help refurbish Laurel Lake Baptist Camp in Kentucky — sanding and painting 95 chairs, cleaning and painting several buildings, and hauling away hundreds of loads of underbrush.

60 years ago

D.A. McCall, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, encourages churches to bid on surplus WWII military chapels presently stored at the Camp Shelby Military Area near Hattiesburg, as a way to start new missions and churches.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a lov-
ing relationship with Him. (I
receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.)

"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiritual
guidance.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE MEMORIAL TO THE MISSING

The Memorial to the Missing is a 12 ft. x 16 ft. x 7 ft. high glassed in case that will hold 50 million pennies. The purpose of the Memorial is to create a visual demonstration of what 50 million missing children look like. Since the Supreme Court Decision in 1973 *Roe vs. Wade*, this year 2006 we will pass the 50 million mark of known legalized abortions. All of those children are gone, missing with no chance for life. While it is impossible to visualize all of those missing children, the penny that may seem to be of very little worth begins to take on an enormous significance as you put one by another and another until you see a million and then 50 million.

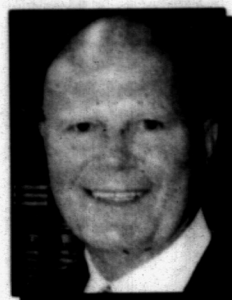
Many of our churches across the state have participated, pooled their pennies, sent them, or brought them and the case is filling up. Hopefully, the following Q & A format will answer any questions you may have about the Memorial, the collection, and usage of the pennies.

Q. Are you still receiving pennies?

A. Yes. Thank you for continuing to provide them. Hardly a day goes by and never a week that someone from our churches or associations does not make a delivery and bring 10,000 to 100,000 more pennies. Sometimes it appears as though a church or a group of churches have all of the pennies in the world only to find out that it takes an enormous pile of pennies to make 50 million. While we hope to reach the goal by September 1, 2006, we will keep on collecting pennies until we do.

Q. How many pennies have been collected?

A. We are approaching the halfway mark with approximately 25 million pennies. It is



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

a site to see. We have not arrived, but we have made tremendous strides and with your help the goal will be reached and the massive Memorial will reflect each precious life that is missing.

Q. I do not have many pennies. Can I give a check or cash?

A. You certainly can. Many children or senior adults groups have depleted their penny reserves around the house, but they still want to give. Any gift designated to the Memorial to the Missing is converted into pennies upon receipt and made a part of the Memorial. One thing that we discovered is that pennies are heavy and cumbersome. Some folks have found it to be easier and more convenient just to give some money.

Q. We have collected a lot of pennies, but we can't get them to the Baptist Building. What should we do?

A. All that is necessary for you to do is call this Toll Free number — 1-800-748-1651, Ext. 329 and tell them you have pennies. If you can get them to your associational office, that would be great, but if you cannot we will have someone from the Baptist Building to come by, load up your pennies, and bring them to be a part of the Memorial.

Q. My church has not participated in gathering pennies for the Memorial. How can I be a part?

A. One of the wonderful things about the Memorial is

that anybody of any age or any size group can participate to the degree that you feel led. Whether it is with one penny you find on the street, a whole bag of pennies that you collect, or a check that you may write. Every contribution helps, makes a difference, and is deeply appreciated.

Q. Where is the Memorial actually located?

A. The glass container sits on the corner of the Baptist Building property at President and Mississippi Streets just across from the Capitol.

Q. How long will the Memorial be in place?

A. At least a year from the time we reach 50 million and maybe longer.

Q. When the Memorial is taken down, what will happen to the 50 million pennies?

A. That is one of the wonderful things about the Memorial. Although the children may be missing, the pennies collected will be put to work. At the conclusion of the Memorial the pennies will be put into an endowment with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. Some simple math will reveal that 50 million pennies equals a half million dollars. Each year the proceeds from the endowment will be put back into pro-life needs. Across our state there are Christian Crisis Pregnancy Centers and special needs related to women struggling with an unwanted preg-

nancy. The dollars produced from the endowment will all go to help with these needs. There will be absolutely no salaries or administrative costs coming out of these funds, but every penny will be channeled into areas that will help give life rather than destroy life.

Q. I am not able to come and see the Memorial and many people in my church would like to see what it is like. Is there any way to convey to them information about the Memorial for the Missing?

A. At the dedication of the Memorial for the Missing there was a song written and dedicated by Jerry Mixon and Eva Hart just for that event. Then at the ceremony Lisa Leavell gave a moving presentation of the song. Upon request you can receive a DVD that can be shown to your church or any group within the church. It will bless you and bring you to be a part of the event. To receive a copy simply call 1-800-748-1651, Ext. 329 and a copy will be sent to you free.

Please pray for people who may be facing the difficulty of an unwanted pregnancy and for people who are struggling with the aftermath of a decision to have an abortion.

Please pray that God will use the Memorial to heighten the awareness of everyone who sees it or hears about it to understand the enormity of the loss of the experience that happens quietly and almost unseen that it will become an unforgettable image that will help us as a nation to turn from this practice and focus on the wonder of life.

Please pray that by God's grace our nation will declare that the destruction of little children is no longer an option or an action in our nation.

The author may be contacted at
P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

GuideStone to host August retirement meetings

DALLAS (Special) — GuideStone Financial Resources and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) will hold a series of Retirement Choices meetings statewide during the month of August. These meetings are designed to help ministers and other church employees who have been investing in a retirement plan through GuideStone Financial Resources make informed choices about retirement, particularly benefit distribution options.

"For years our participants have focused on one thing: growing their accounts" said Chris Elkins, area coordinator in the Financial Solutions and Services — Churches division at GuideStone. "As our participants approach retirement, other priorities like preserving their account become as important, if not more so, than growth."

Benefit distributions options also become more important as a participant nears retirement age. "GuideStone offers several distribution options to its participants," said Robin Nichols, financial services representative at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

"Each participant has to decide which option or combination of options is right for his or her situation."

Invitations were sent to about 1,500 ministers and other employees of Mississippi Baptist churches who have retirement accounts at GuideStone and are at least 55 years of age.

"All participants of any age are invited," said Elkins a former staffer at First Church, Jackson, "but those nearing retirement often have more interest in these issues."

For Mississippi Baptist participants who have a GuideStone account and would like to attend a seminar at one of seven scheduled locations, return the registration slip on the invitation received in the mail, or contact Vicki Goodson by email at Vicki.Goodson@GuideStone.org or by phone at (214) 720-4663.

There is no cost for attendance or materials at the seminar. Generally the seminars last at least two hours. The Retirement Choices Seminars will be held at the following locations in Mississippi:

First Church, Holly Springs
August 3 - 6:30 p.m.

MBCB/Baptist Building, Jackson
August 7 - 8:30 a.m.

Lincoln Association, Brookhaven
August 7 - 2:30 p.m.

38th Avenue Church, Hattiesburg
August 8 - 8:30 a.m.

First Church, Marion
August 8 - 6:30 p.m.

First Church, Starkville
August 9 - 8:30 a.m.

Calvary Church, Greenwood
August 10 - 6:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Robin Nichols at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3226 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 226. E-mail: rnichols@mbcb.org.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Deacon Ordination, Mt. Moriah Church, Lincoln County

1. **Mt. Moriah Church, Lincoln County**, recently ordained Caleb Bonds as deacon. Shown are pastor Danny Moss and Bonds.

2. The **Hispanic Immigrant Clinic** at Sunflower recently celebrated eight years of operation. The clinic is sponsored by **Calvary Chapel, Parchman**. Shown are Elouise Brunson, Becky Winters, staff physician Joe Roberts, and Shirley Simmons.

3. **Anchor Church, Lafayette Association**, recognizes its Bible drillers: Kendall Shows, Taylor Carson, Nick Harmon, Jake McPhail, and Shelby Lee.

4. **First Church, Holly Springs**, is hosting its 12th annual Ladies' Conference, Time Out for Women, Aug. 11-12. Keynote speakers are Rita Sweat and Cheri Holcomb; praise and worship leaders are Sharon Williams, Dee Whisenant, and Tamara Hiller. The conference begins 6 p.m. Friday and ends noon Saturday. For more information, call (662) 252-2627.



3. Bible Drillers, Anchor Church, Lafayette Association

5. **Yockanookany Church, Kosciusko**, dedicated a new church sign June 28, designed by church member Bill Bagley. Barron Pilgrim, pastor.

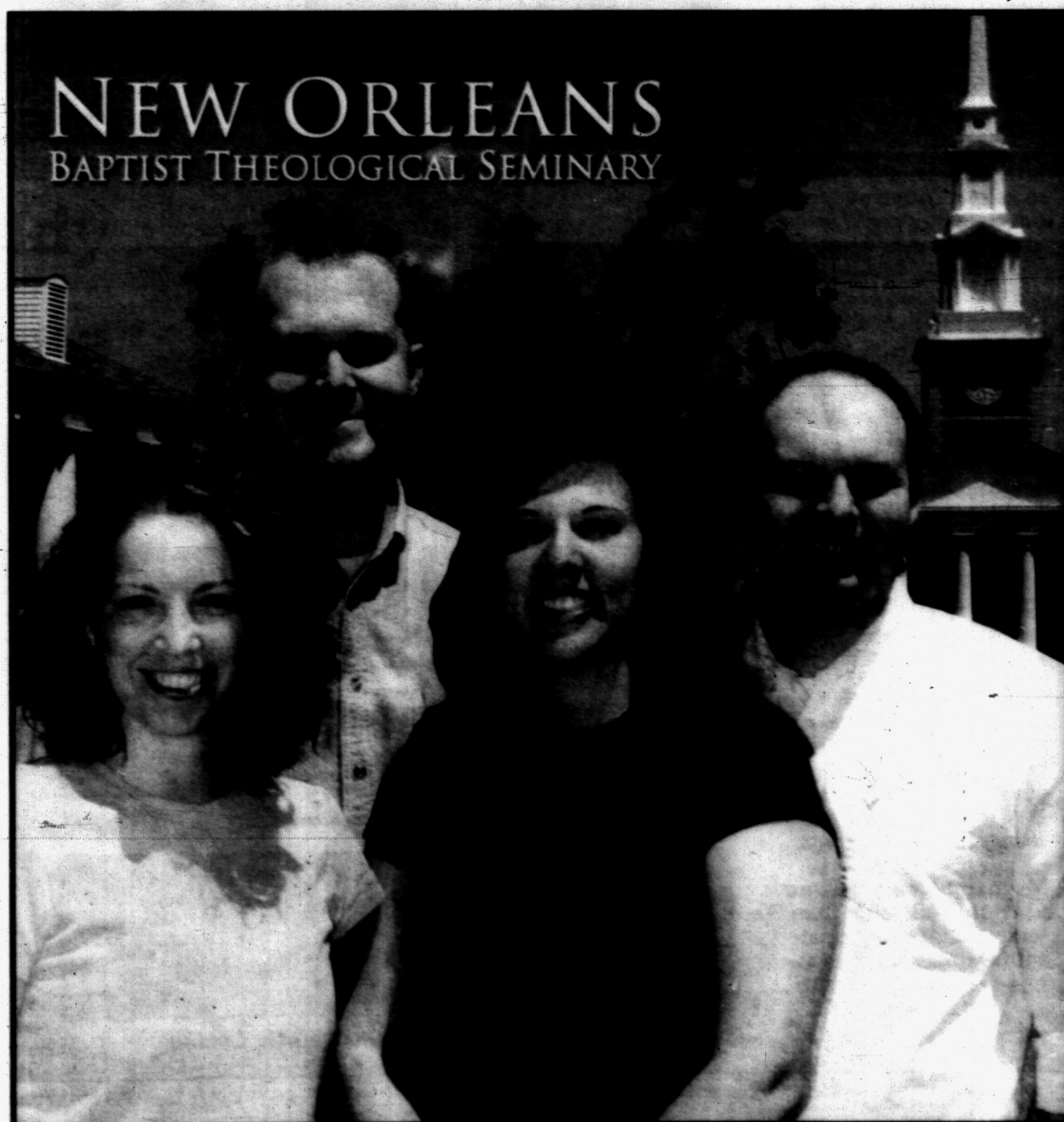
6. **Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association**, honored several mothers on Homecoming and Mother's Day. Shown are Ruby Smart and Avil Kitchens.



6. Smart and Kitchens, Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Assoc.



2. Hispanic Immigrant Clinic sponsored by Calvary Chapel, Parchman



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1. VBS, Hepzibah Church, Silver Creek



2. VBS, Sunrise Church, Carthage



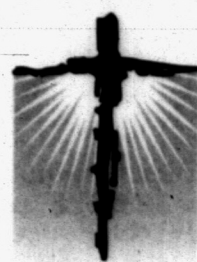
3. VBS, Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch



4. VBS Participants, Bunker Hill Church, Columbia



4. VBS Leaders, Bunker Hill Church, Columbus



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. Hepzibah Church, Silver Creek, held its VBS May 29-June 2. Shown are the participants.

2. Sunrise Church, Carthage, recently held its VBS. Shown are the participants.

3. Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch, recently held its VBS. Shown are the participants.

4. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia, held its VBS June 5-9, with a total of 141 students, teachers, and leaders, and seven professions of faith. Shown are some of the participants.

5. Providence Church, Grenada, held its VBS June 12-16, with a total enrollment of 61. Shown are the participants.

6. Children attending VBS at Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol, donated paper products to Happiness Hills, a Christian girls school, and gave the missions offering to the Baptist Children's Village. Shown are Anna and Mrs. Jack High.

7. First Church, Eupora, held its VBS June 12-16. High attendance was 178, and the children collected \$385 for the Baptist Children's Village. Shown are some of the participants.

8. Arlington Church, Bogue Chitto, enrolled 112 students and workers in VBS June 5-9. Martha Beavers, director; Keith Smith, pastor.

9. First Church, Cleveland, held its VBS June 12-16 with an enrollment of 204; one salvation and several other decisions. Bradley Rushing, pastor; Paul Lee, minister of education; Jim Raney, minister of music. Shown are some of the participants.

10. Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, had more than 30 senior adults participate in a three day VBS. Shown are some of the participants.



5. VBS, Providence Church, Grenada



6. Happiness Hills donation, Sebastopol Church, Sebastopol



7. VBS, First Church, Eupora



8. VBS, Arlington Church, Bogue Chitto



9. VBS, First Church, Cleveland



10. VBS, Morrison Heights Church, Clinton



1. Conn Ordination, Topeka Church, Jayess



2. Adult Bible Drillers, Faithview Church, Harrison County



3. Penny Collection, Thorn Hill Church, Pelahatchie



4. Disaster Relief Offering, Cold Springs Church, Collins

1. **Topeka Church, Jayess**, licensed Jeffrey Conn to the gospel ministry June 25. Shown are pastor Dale Authement, Conn, Nicole Conn and Isabella Conn. Conn is available for pulpit supply.

2. **Faithview Church, Harrison County**, had six adults to advance to the associational Bible drills. Shown are Jason Ross, Angelia Ross, Susan McKnight, Dottie Lanier, Frances Kellogg, and Betty Mathias.

3. Lee Yancey, consultant with the Christian Action Commission, assisted a group from **Thorn Hill Church, Pelahatchie**, in putting pennies in the Memorial to the Missing at the Baptist Building, Jackson, June 28. Shown are, front row, Hunter Keene, Kasey King, Victoria Stewart; back row, Yancey, Cynthia White, Holly Rodgers, Jason King, Wanda Haven, C.J. King, Sara King, and Cruz Costello.

4. **Cold Springs Church, Collins**, collected an offering for disaster relief at Emmanuel Church, Biloxi, during their Vacation Bible School. Pastor David McNeil recently presented a check for Emmanuel for \$1021.06 to Keith Rogers, minister of music. Shown are McNeil and Rogers.

5. **North Columbia Church, Columbia**, broke ground June 25 on an addition onto the existing sanctuary including a nursery, preschool department, and education space. Shown are pastor Mike Grenn, Lewis King, Bill Pachmayr, Eric Lucas, Gary Sanders, Bill Greenlee, Hal Daley, Joe Pope, Melvin "Buddy" Jones, and Stacy Nolan.

6. **Morrison Heights Church, Clinton**, will conduct a prayer and spiritual awakening conference themed *Going Deeper with God — Discovering the Secrets of Mountain-Moving Prayer*, July 30-Aug. 1, led by Gregory Frizzel, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Sun., 9, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Tue., 7 p.m. For more information, call (601) 925-5620.

7. **Glorieta Conference Center** is hosting the 8th Retiree Ministries' Retreat Sept. 25-29. Conferences include Health and Nutrition, Social Security and Medicare, Estate Planning Helps, etc. Room and meals are \$376/couple, \$286/single occupancy,

and \$188/single double occupancy. For reservations, call (800) 797-4222.

8. **Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle**, will host Jerry Pipes, leading a series of seminars on strengthening the family July 22-23. Sat., 7 p.m., 7th grade through college; Sun., 9:30 a.m., for prospective parents, parents, and parents, and Sun. evening; for more information, call (601) 520-3128.

Olive Hundley Reppeto, 74, an emeritus missionary of the International Mission Board, died May 30 in Jackson. Reppeto grew up in Yazoo City, and she and her husband Jim served in Mexico and Costa Rica. The couple retired to Bentonia. She is survived by her husband, three daughters, three grandsons, and one great-granddaughter. Memorials may be made to Mississippi Baptists' Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.



5. Groundbreaking, North Columbia Church, Columbia

COLLEGE NEWS



1. MC students gather in the Quad during orientation

1. **Mississippi College** encourages first year students to participate in Freshman Orientation. For information about registration for MC's fall semester, call (601) 925-3800 or visit www.mc.edu. Shown are students gathering in the Quad between sessions during orientation.

2. **Survival Weekend 2006** hosted by the William Carey University Baptist Student Union (BSU) will take place August 11 through 13 prior to the beginning of classes on the Hattiesburg campus. Registration for the weekend begins at 4:30 p.m. August 11 followed by a weekend of events culminating with various church services on Sunday. Student can check into dorms between 9 a.m. and noon and 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Friday. Survival Weekend is open to all new freshmen and transfer students entering WCU. The registration fee of \$25 includes all activities, meals and t-shirt and must be received by July 27. After July 27, the registration fee is \$35. For more information contact Tim Glaze at (601) 318-6161 or (800) 962-5991 ext. 161 or the BSU website at www.careybsusurvival.com.



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MT. LIBERTY CHURCH NEAR WATER VALLEY, MISS., is seeking a full-time pastor. If interested and for more information, send resume to 4997 County Road 220, Water Valley, MS 38965. Or call (662) 473-3490 after 4:30 p.m. and speak with Larry.

FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR: GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, MISS., is accepting resumes for full-time associate pastor. Mail resume to: Search Committee, 111 Grace Avenue, Philadelphia MS 39350, www.GraceBaptistPhiladelphia.Org.

NEEDED: PART-TIME ORGANIST IN METRO JACKSON AREA CHURCH. Call Ronnie at (601) 946-9406.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT FOR A PEARL CHURCH. Shelby database, dictaphone, PowerPoint. Reply to P. O. Box 1497, Brandon, MS 39043.

CORINTH BAPTIST CHURCH, MAGEE, MISS., is taking resumes for the position of youth minister. Please mail resumes to attention search committee, Corinth Baptist Church, 207 Church Road, Magee, MS 39111 by August 14, 2006.

DERMA BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a full-time youth minister who has a passion for students and a heart for making a difference. Candidates should submit their resumes to westfam@tds.net.

JOHNS BAPTIST CHURCH is seeking a Minister of Music for contemporary-style music program. Please send resume to 426 Pineview Lane, Brandon, MS 39042, or Call (601) 824-9404.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF STUDENTS position available at Auburn Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss. Please send resumes to Auburn Baptist Church, 1138 Road 931, Tupelo, MS 38804.

SUNRISE BAPTIST CHURCH IN CARTHAGE, MISS., is accepting resumes for a part-time minister of music and a part-time minister of youth, or a full-time minister of music/minister of youth. Please send resume to search committee, c/o Margaret Thompson, 721 Midway Road, Carthage, MS 39051.

Miss. Baptist Youth Night set July 21

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night, one of the largest gatherings of Southern Baptists in the nation, will be held on July 21 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson, beginning at 6:30 p.m. "Plan on being a part of a great night of challenge and encouragement," said Harvey Ellis, consultant in the Discipleship and Family Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. "This will be an incredible night for students and their leaders from across our great state."

David Platt, formerly Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics at New Orleans Seminary and now pastor at the Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, is the speaker. Worship leader is Steve Fee, the former leader of the Passion One Day campus tour and the current worship leader for 7:22, an Atlanta-based Bible study for area singles that draws an average attendance of 3,000 people.

For more information on Mississippi Baptist Youth Night, contact Ellis at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3286 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 286. E-mail: hgeillis@mbcb.org.

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MINISTER TO CHILDREN, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CROSSETT, ARK. Resumes to: children's search committee, First Baptist Church, 701 Main Street, Crossett, AR 71635 or fwhite@fbccrossett.com.

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CENTER FOR PREGNANCY CHOICES OF LAWRENCE COUNTY IN MONTICELLO, MISS., is seeking a qualified female to become the Executive Director of the CPC. Please send resume to CPC of Lawrence County, P.O. Box 344, Monticello, MS 39654.

REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Antioch Church, Columbus: Homecoming, July 30; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m. followed by noon meal and gospel singing.

Bond Church, Wiggins: Homecoming and building dedication, July 29-30; Sat., Providential Quartet, 6 p.m.; Sun., dedication, 11 a.m., followed by lunch.

Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto: Revival, July 30-Aug. 3; Sun., 6:45 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 7 p.m.; Larry LeBlanc, Summit, speaker; Bradley White, Summit, music; Trent Bilbo, pastor.

Calvary Church, Carroll County: Revival, July 23-26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. nightly, Sun.-Wed.; Jack (Chuck) Provine, speaker; Wilton Neal, music.

Calvary Church, Silver Creek: Revival, July 23-26; Sun., regular services; evening service followed by supper; Mon.-Wed., supper, 6:15, followed by worship; Larue Stephens, Jon Daniels, Mike Grenn, and Wayne Van Horn, speakers.

Concord Church, Yazoo City: Homecoming and Revival, Aug. 6-9; Regular Sunday morning services followed by lunch and afternoon service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Taylor, speaker; Ronnie Cottingham, music; Thomas R. Arinder, pastor.

First Church, Batesville: James E. Messer Evangelism Bible Conference, July 23-26; Sun., 8:15 and 10:45 a.m., and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., noon and 7 p.m.; Emir Caner, Toby Frost, Fred Luter, John Avant, and James Messer, speakers; music, Phil Willis, John Yates, and Sons of the Father; John Yates, children's worship.

Hurley Church, Hurley: Homecoming and Revival, July 23-26; Sun., Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground and worship, 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Norman Hunt, speaker; Mitch Osborne, music; Breaux Tagueant, pastor.

Leflore Church, Holcomb: Revival, July 30-Aug. 2; Sun., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., followed by worship and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Harold Danley, speaker; Ray Mattox, pianist.

Lone Star, Collins: Revival, July 23-26; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; noon lunch and 1:15 p.m. worship; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Norris Ables, speaker; Danny Harrison, music; James Garner, pastor.

Ludlow Church, Ludlow: Revival, July 23-28; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Earl Clark, speaker; Gene Laton, music; Sylvia Graves, pianist; M.L. Wallace, pastor.

Mt. Zion Church, Simpson County: Revival and homecoming, July 23-26; Sun., 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Danny Berry, homecoming speaker; Mitchell Roberts, homecoming music; Clark Stewart, revival speaker; Benji Rigley, revival music.

New Hope Church, Sumrall: Revival, July 23-28; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch, and 1:15 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; John Reid, speaker; Bill Hall, music.

Pleasant Hill Church, Bogue Chitto: 150th anniversary, Aug. 5-6; Sat., 4:30-7:30 p.m., reception and hymn sing; Sun., 10 a.m., worship, followed by noon meal and 1:30 p.m. service; Steve Dean, speaker; David Doty, music.

Salem Heights Church, Laurel: James E. Messer Evangelism Bible Conference, Aug. 6-9; Sun., 10:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Emir Caner, John Sullivan, Johnny Hunt, Jerry Vines, and Bill Britt, speakers; music, Phil Willis, John Yates, and Sons of the Father; John Yates, children's worship; D.J. Benson, pastor; for more information, call (601) 763-7571.

Stanton Church, Natchez: Revival, Aug. 6-9; Mike Routon, Petal, speaker; Steve Purvis, pastor; for information, call (601) 442-4926.

Star Church, Star: 100th anniversary homecoming and revival, July 30-Aug. 2; worship, Sun., 10 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; services to feature former pastors, music directors, and youth ministers.

Steele Church, Forest: Revival, July 23-25; Sun., worship, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch, and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, speaker.

Victory Church, Bassfield: Revival, July 23-28; Sun. services regular time; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Ken Roberts, Bassfield, speaker; Phillip Butler, Sumrall, music; George Gerald Aultman, pastor.

Wheeler Grove Church, Alcorn County: Revival, Aug. 6-9; Sun., 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bob Pittman, speaker.



Practical Principles for Christian Living

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 7

Assault on families more than 'gay' issue

By Jimmy Porter



The sun was blazing and the perspiration was flowing, but no one cared. All eyes were fastened on the 18 nine-year-olds as they played baseball as though it was the

seventh game of the World Series. It was a good time as moms, dads, grandparents, and other family members gathered to see their future Hall of Famer play — but how long will these events last as some are trying to redefine marriage and thus destroy the family unit?

These past few weeks there has been some exciting news for pro-marriage proponents. The New York and Georgia Supreme Courts have ruled that marriage is to be defined as a union between one man and one woman.

On July 10, Massachusetts's highest court ruled that a proposed constitutional marriage amendment could appear on the ballot if it passes the legislature. Homosexual activists argued that the Massachusetts Constitution prevents a constitutional amendment from reversing

rulings by the state high court. The ruling of interest is the 2003 landmark decision to legalize "gay marriage."

All across America there are potential court battles looming as the future of the family hangs in the balance. The need for a Federal Marriage Amendment to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman is still valid. Most congressional members prefer leaving these decisions up to the states, but an unpredictable judicial system creates a lot of uncertainty.

As these battles take place in the courtrooms of America there is another danger to the family that is wreaking havoc in unprecedented numbers. This disease is called DIVORCE.

Harry Hallis wrote in "Preventing Divorce," "... statistics are dreadful and shocking. More than one out of three first marriages ends in divorce. The deeper tragedies, however, lie behind the statistics: broken dreams, traumatized communities, angry adults, demoralized families, disrupted communities, cynical young adults, broken commitments, fatigued marriage partners, and tears, loneliness, pain, embarrassment, and grief."

In Mississippi in 2004 there were 13,003 divorces recorded. Sixteen hundred of

these occurred in marriages of twenty years or more. Just imagine the numbers of individuals whose lives were adversely affected in those thirteen thousand divorces. And it happens year after year.

One group that suffers more than any other is the children. A recent study has shown that there is a vast difference in what happens to children in healthy versus unhealthy families. Over 13,000 students in grades 7 through 12 were studied. The results were startling. The study found that "adolescents in intact, two-parent families are less likely than peers from other family types to be suspended or expelled from school, less likely to commit delinquent crimes, less likely to be reported for problem behaviors at school, less likely to receive low grades in two or more subjects, and more likely to score well on standard tests of cognitive development" (The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission).

One might think that the evangelical community would fare better than the secular community but not according to George Barna and his research teams. One of his reports says, "Although many Christian churches attempt to dissuade congregants from getting a divorce, the research confirms that born-again

Christians have the same likelihood of divorce as do non-Christians. Among married born-again Christians, 35% have experienced a divorce. That figure is identical to the outcome among married adults who are not born again: 35%."

Clearly, we have two major problems in America related to family: gay marriage initiatives and divorce. Mississippi passed a constitutional amendment defining marriage as one man and one woman with an 85% vote. But the vote to define marriage did nothing to prevent the breakup of Mississippi homes.

It is important that we continue the fight against same-sex marriages, but Mississippi Baptists need to seek creative ways to help troubled families work through their problems and build homes that are an honor unto our Lord. Defining marriage correctly is not all God expects of us.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: jporter@christianaction.com. Web site: www.christianaction.com.

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ROMANS 12:2

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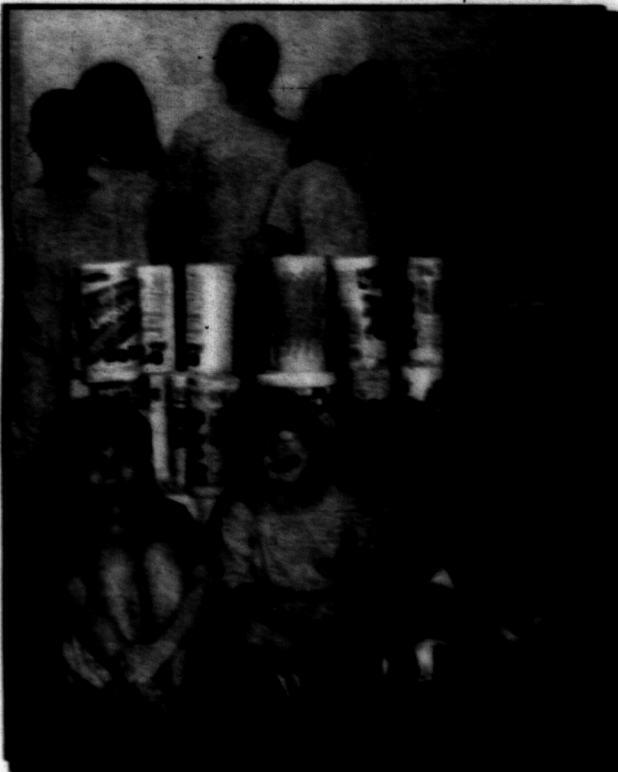
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The Baptist Children's Village Invites You to our Open House

Moore Cottage
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80 Sellers Street
Wiggins, Mississippi 39577
Sunday, July 30, 2006
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Moore Cottage is the result of much generosity and volunteer labor. Please come and help us celebrate God's continued provision in this 109 year old residential child care ministry.

For directions, visit our website
at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com
or call 601-922-2242.

Support for 2006 High School Seniors

The Baptist Children's Village has four high school seniors graduating this month. Some will go away to college/technical school; others will continue to live on the respective campuses and commute to school, but all are continuing their education. They all have a list of special needs to help them make this transition.

You can make a donation designated for our seniors or contact Mrs. Chrystelle Thames at 601-922-2242 or cthames@baptistchildrensvillage.com for specific items off of their needs list. All donations should be sent to:

The Baptist Children's Village
PO Box 27 • Clinton MS 39060-0027

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

I Will Remain Loyal to God

Exodus 15:22-26, 16:2-4; 31-35

By Les Colvin

We all experience tests in life. Whether it's medical tests, driving tests, or just the every day tests of life, they are always with us. We can't get away from them. Tests have two primary functions in our lives. The first is to "reveal" our condition. Whether it's how much I know about history or New Testament, or what shape my heart is in, tests show the condition of our lives in a particular area. The second function tests can have in our lives is to prepare us for future experiences. Tests prepare and strengthen us for what lies ahead.

As we continue to follow Moses and Israel's journey through the wilderness, we will see how God used tests to accomplish the work He was doing in their lives.

Tests Have Godly Purposes (Ex. 15:22-26)

The wilderness experience was a test for the Israelites. As they journeyed through the wilderness, they had no water, and the water they finally found was bitter and they could not drink it. Verse 24 says they grumbled and complained to Moses about their situation. There are several lessons we can learn. First, tests can come in direct obedience to the Lord's leading. Israel was in the wilderness, having been led there by Moses and thus the Lord. Many times we think if we are following and obeying God that everything in our lives should go well. However, that is not usually the case. The second lesson is that tests often come immediately following a spiritual high or significant experience in our lives.



Colvin

In the previous verses, Moses and the Israelites had just celebrated their deliverance from Egypt. This test in the wilderness comes immediately after that experience. The third lesson is that God allows the bitter in our lives to teach us to obey, trust and depend on Him. In verse 26, He gives them the purpose for this test.

Tests Reveal Loyalty (Ex. 16:2-4)

The Israelites continue to wander in the wilderness and they continue to grumble about their circumstances. Just as physical tests reveal the condition of our bodies or our minds, spiritual tests from God reveal our spiritual condition. Just as soon as the Israelites are once again tried and tested, they turn on Moses and God wishing they were back in Egypt. Their apparent loyalty to Moses and to God only lasted as long as their needs were being met. True faith in God lasts through tests. Look at what James 1:2-4 says about tests and trials. "Consider it a sheer gift,

friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way." (Message Bible)

Tests Show God's Provision (Ex. 16:31-35)

Once again, God provided for Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness. He met their physical needs while teaching them spiritual lessons. God too, will use tests in our lives to demonstrate His provision and faithfulness to us. What are the lessons we can learn concerning God's provision? First, we must follow God's directions. We must do it His way. Israel wanted to go out and do their own thing and expected God to provide for them. It didn't work that way. They learned to depend on God to meet their needs by obeying Him. Second, God provides for our needs as we experience those needs. He provided

manna on a daily basis for Israel. Likewise, He will provide for our daily needs. We can't get ahead of God. We have to trust Him day by day.

I have just returned with a group from our church on a mission trip with the WMU Family Fest to Hawaii. It was a wonderful experience as we ministered to and with the Hawaiian churches and people. While there, we had the opportunity to experience the Hawaiian culture. We ate their food and worshipped in their churches which were considerably different from that which we enjoy in the south. We were tested in several areas of our commitment to the Lord and the work to which we were called. God, as always, proved Himself faithful and worked both in and through us to accomplish His purposes and provided for our needs. We can learn to trust God and remain loyal to Him through the tests He allows in our lives.

Colvin is Minister of Education/Administrator at First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

What's Life All About?

Ecc. 1:1-2, 16-17; 2:1, 3-4, 11, 24, 26; 3:16-17

By Ginger M. Caughman

Popular songs of the past have tried to find life's meaning. Songs like "What's It All About, Alfie?" or "Is That All There Is?" The lyrics of "Alfie" ask questions and pose answers but do they know the true meaning of the love they are seeking? People everywhere are seeking love and the Holy Bible says, "GOD IS LOVE!" Selfless, giving, agape, God's love is needed by our world.

For five weeks we will study what the Christian is to do when life seems empty or absolutely futile. Where are answers? For us the answer is clear: The Holy Bible! These lessons are drawn from passages in the Book of Ecclesiastes that relate to Solomon's search for fulfillment, the failure of wealth to satisfy the deepest human longings, coping with life's mortality

and injustices, using wisely the time God has given us, and our ultimate accountability to God. "The book is true to the historical accounts of Solomon" (J. Wash Watts).

This week's lesson is the quarter's evangelistic lesson. Seek to find and lead others to find spiritual answers to life's questions by experiencing fulfillment in a personal faith relationship with God.

Solomon asked God for and was granted the gift of wisdom. Solomon searched everywhere for happiness but writes how much of his searching failed to fulfill. Study the Scriptures as you consider these topics this week: Is fulfillment found in wisdom? Is fulfillment found in the so-called good life? Continue to think about your purpose.

God has a future and a hope for your life.



Caughman

Two enormously popular books answer the question, what is life all about? People are searching for meaning. "The Purpose Driven Church" and even more so, "The Purpose Driven Life" have had phenomenal sales throughout the world. The basic premise is life is about God and we are meant for worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism (Rick Warren).

In Ecclesiastes the first three verses express the books theme. "Meaningless! Meaningless! Everything is meaningless." (Ecc. 1: 1-2). Certainly there is value in pursuing education and seeking human wisdom but these cannot satisfy the deepest hunger in the human heart. Solomon declares that wisdom (Chapter 1), pleasure and folly (Chapter 2a), and toil or work (Chapter 2b) are all meaningless without God!

Some people reject Christianity as superstition or myth. Some try to intellectualize a relationship based on faith.

Respected Christian writer C. S. Lewis was not always a believer. In his autobiographical account of his pilgrimage to come to know Christ, the title conveys his feelings about Christianity. Lewis was "Surprised by Joy." Perhaps you or someone you know would benefit from reading the book.

Some people may think the words of "the Preacher" came from the Byrds or Pete Seeger in the Sixties, Dolly Parton in the Eighties or Forrest Gump in the Nineties when the song, "Turn, Turn, Turn: To Everything There Is a Season" was popular. One phrase was added to rhyme with hate; "...it's not too late." But the ancient wisdom came from our text, in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

In this discourse of activities, "a time for everything" (3:1), there is an awareness of the eternal order. "God put eternity in their hearts" (3:11). "Everything God does will endure forever!" (3:14).

Christians, pray for an opportunity to witness to someone of the true peace and fulfillment in a faith relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Teachers

encourage unbelievers to place their faith in Christ. I pray that something in this series of lessons has encouraged or strengthened your faith or has caused you to want to ask someone personally to tell you about Jesus Christ, the only true hope to give you inner peace and a purpose for your life.

Fulfillment is found in receiving life as a gift from God, turning to God in repentance, receiving him in a personal relationship through the Lord Jesus Christ, and living by faith to daily please Him, convinced that God ultimately will judge all people.

So what's life all about? Jesus! Do you know Him? Admit you are a sinner and need God in your life. Believe "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." To all who received Him Christ Jesus died for your sins and wants you to let Him be your Savior. Choose salvation today and walk in newness of life! Abundant life is in Him!

Caughman teaches Sunday School and sings in the choir at First Church, Magee.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

THE BAPTIST
Record

Analysis: The case for alcohol abstinence

Editor's note: The 2006 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Greensboro, N.C., was punctuated with a lively debate on a strongly-worded resolution calling on Southern Baptists to abstain from the use of alcohol. The resolution passed, and Southwestern Seminary President Paige Patterson offers below an analysis of why Southern Baptists should abstain from alcohol use. His analysis is provided courtesy of Baptist Press.

References to wine are frequent in both the Old and New Testaments. The Masoretic text of the Old Testament employs the Hebrew word "yayin" in the vast majority of cases — 141 times to be exact. A handful of other words are translated "wine" but not with enough frequency to matter. The Greek term "oinos" is used predominantly in the New Testament, and coming through Latin is transliterated into English as "wine." The Greek term "gleukos" (literally, "sweet wine") is sometimes used.

The wines varied in kind and strength. However, four basic varieties may be distinguished, all of which are described indiscriminately by "oinos":

- Freshly pressed grape juice, which had been stomped out by the (hopefully) clean feet of a local family in their private wine vats, or else crushed in grape presses of stone. In the climate of Palestine, fermentation began within 24 hours, so pure unfermented grape juice was available only for a brief time.

- The initial, violent, foaming fermentation process lasted about one week. The wine was then transferred to new wineskins for 40 days of further fermentation. The heavier matter, called "lees," or "dregs," would settle to the bottom and then the wine would be drawn off, providing the daily drink.

- Sometimes the wine would be left on the lees to ferment still further. This provided a real knock-out punch, one evidently imbibed by only a few since it often turned insipid and unbearable. (Jeremiah 48:11).

- Wine frequently was diluted with water or herbs or both. On the cross, Jesus was offered such a concoction of cheap, low-grade wine, which He refused.

Attitude of Scripture

In strict fairness, one must acknowledge that the ancients, however noble, imbibed without reluctance. Evidently the prophets and the apostles did not view this as wrong, so long as it was a small glass of wine (see varieties Nos. 1, 2 or 4 mentioned above) taken with the noon or evening meal. These wines, of course, were locally produced.

At this point, however, a significant difference exists between what is permissible and what is best for the child of God. In addition to the constant clear identification of drunkenness as a highly disreputable and debilitating sort of sin, please note the following:

- The Nazarite (one who was especially separated unto God) was prohibited from the use of wine altogether (see Numbers 6:3; Judges 13:4-7, 13-14).

- In Jeremiah 35:1-10, the Rechabites are highly commended by God and by Jeremiah for their total abstinence.

- John the Baptist, touted by Jesus as "the greatest born among men," was a total abstainer. He was evidently patterning his lifestyle after that of the Nazarite Law, and thereby expressing God's prescription for what is the best for a godly man. In fact, the angelic announcement to Zacharias prohibited John the Baptist from using any wine (Luke 1:15).

Here also is noted the first specific contrast between the fullness of the Spirit and the use of wine. This contrast occurs again at Pentecost in Acts 2, and again in Ephesians 5:18.

In the three instances outlined above, the very significant question, "Why?" must be broached. Apparently of the three categories given — prohibition, acceptability, and God's ideal — the above situations fall under the ideal of complete abstinence, and hence appear to be most acceptable to God.

To this evidence must be added Scripture's numerous warnings against strong drink. Here are a few:

- Strong drink is deceitful. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whosoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

- Strong drink is prohibited for those in leadership. "It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes intoxicating drink" (Proverbs 31:4-5).

- Strong drink has a side-effect: weakness in judgment. "But they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" (Isaiah 28:7).

- Strong drink may dull the senses so that embarrassment comes — even indecent exposure. "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory, you also drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord's right hand will be turned against you, and utter shame will be on your glory" (Habakkuk 2:15-16).

- Another result of strong drink is overindulgence. "Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may follow intoxicating drink; who continue until night, till wine inflames them!" (Isaiah 5:11).

Pertinent observations

In Jesus' miracle at Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11), one can neither affirm with certainty that Jesus turned the water into a non-intoxicating wine nor that He drank no wine Himself, but the following evidences cannot be easily bypassed:

- The text nowhere indicates that Jesus participated. Either way the argument is from silence.

- The governor of the feast obviously was able to identify "good wine" by tasting it, indicating that there was no intoxication on his part. On the other hand, by the governor's own testimony, by the last stages of such a feast participants generally had their senses sufficiently dulled so that they could not differentiate between good and bad wine. Was this feast different? Is this why Jesus agreed to attend?

- From a standpoint of logic, the "oinos" that Jesus produced was more likely pure, rather than fermented, grape juice, since that which comes from the Creator's hand is inevitably pure. Also, there was no time for fermentation to take place subsequent to the miracle. Furthermore, the ancients always acknowledged that the best "oinos" was the unfermented "oinos," i.e., that which came from the initial mixing of the grapes.

- The accusation that Jesus, in contrast to John, was a socialite, a glutton, and a winebibber is manifestly void of foundation (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34). Because Jesus enjoyed social contacts and openly mingled with the people, some assumed that He had a propensity for food and drink.

If Jesus had been a winebibber, He must have also been guilty of gluttony, which is clearly identified as a sin. In fact, Jesus was neither, and again there is no evidence that He drank "oinos" or anything other than the fresh, natural fruit of the vine.

- Paul advised Timothy to imbibe a little wine for his stomach's sake (1 Timothy 5:23), but note the following: The purpose here clearly is medicinal. Timothy was obviously not in full health. In the absence of more advanced medications, this command is certainly understandable. In the case of no superior medication, wine might be justified as medication, but only if taken as "a little wine."

Furthermore, the clear case of religious abstinence from wine, i.e., total abstinence, is often overlooked. Timothy is drinking only water. Then Paul said, you need the wine for medical purposes. What is to be said of the reason for Timothy's abstinence to this point?

Further Observations

- In the accounts of the Lord's Supper in the Gospels and in 1 Corinthians, the word wine (oinos) is mysteriously absent. The disciples took "the cup" and drank the "fruit of the vine." The absence of the term "oinos" is curious, to say the least.

- Wine has one unqualified, good use in Scripture and that is as a metaphor for the wrath of God. This metaphor is utilized in both Old and New Testaments (see Revelation 19:15). The "oinos" of God's wrath is unmixed or undiluted, fresh from the wine press, unhindered by fermentation of any kind. Purity of judgment is emphasized.

- The bishop (pastor) is to be free from wine (1 Timothy 3:3). One would presume that this admonition, at least in part, is for an example. If so, here again the ideal would be total abstinence for all who make up the body of Christ, i.e., the church.

- For the believer to say, "Let me get as close to sin as I can without being guilty," indicates a strange mentality indeed! The object should rather be to stay as far away as one can from even the appearance of evil, and as close to Christ as possible (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

The following conclusions may be drawn: Many of the most excruciating and debilitating events of history are associated with wine. The Bible has almost no good word about it and, in fact, usually associates tragedy and sin with the use of wine.

To whatever extent wine was used by Jesus, clearly it was in small quantities and either at meals or for medicinal purposes. Certainly no tragic industry was supported by the selling and buying of wine. This latter point is crucial for the believer. A believer in no way can justify drinking if thereby he is contributing to the sustenance of an industry responsible for two-thirds of the violent deaths, two-fifths of all divorces, one-third of all crime, and untold millions of dollars in damage to private property. Such would violate all laws in the Bible, and especially the Corinthian principles outlined below:

- The effect of your choices and actions on others. "Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble" (1 Corinthians 8:13).

- The effect of your choices and actions on you. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful: all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Corinthians 10:23).

- The effect of your choices and actions on the kingdom of God. "Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Even if a Christian wished to demur from the idea that to take a drink is sin, strict biblical evidence establishes that imbibing strong drink is not God's ideal for the believer. The question then becomes: Can it be anything less than sin for a believer who is genuinely grateful for the atoning power of Christ in his life to pursue anything other than the highest — God's ideal — the best that he can be for Christ?

Bibliocipher

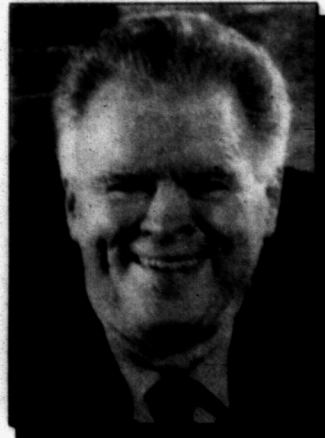
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YMI QTWI MFYM RFIJ
GFWJ MNX MTQD FWR
NS YMI JDIX TK FQQ YMI
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JSIX TK YMI JFWYM
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NXFNFM KNKYD-YBT:YJS

Clue: Q = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Exodus Fourteen: Thirteen.



Patterson